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5 June 2015

Vicki Redhead
Principal
Bishop Creighton Academy
Vineyard Road
Peterborough
PE1 5DB

Dear Mrs Redhead

Special measures monitoring inspection of Bishop Creighton Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 3–4 June 2015 with Associate Inspector Richard Spencer, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures in January 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint NQTs.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, The Chief Executive of the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust and the Director of Children's Services for Peterborough.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc. Chair of the Governing Body
cc. Local authority
cc. The Secretary of State

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2014

- Eliminate inadequate teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, and increase the proportion that is good or outstanding, so that pupils make faster progress by:
 - improving pupils' knowledge and skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and number work
 - improving the early reading (phonics) skills of pupils in Key Stage 1, and plugging the gaps in the phonic knowledge of older pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - making sure that pupils improve their work by acting on the guidance teachers provide when they mark their work
 - making sure that pupils are ready to learn and concentrate well throughout lessons.

- Improve leadership and management and increase the capacity of leaders to secure necessary improvement by:
 - increasing the number of staff available to share leadership tasks, including the leading of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
 - building on the work already started to hold teachers to account for the progress made by their pupils
 - making sure that leaders and governors are trained to analyse the data collected about pupils' attainment and progress to eliminate the underachievement of all groups, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported by pupil premium funding.

An external review of governance, to include an evaluation of the school's use of pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 3–4 June 2015

Evidence

During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, the deputy principal, the executive principal and chief executive of the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. We discussed the progress of the academy with parents and carers at the new intake meeting and with pupils in classes and in the playground. Inspectors met with the academy council and with teaching staff following observation of lessons. We reviewed data on pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, curriculum plans and other documentation including the academy's self-evaluation.

Context

Since the last visit, the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have been appointed to the posts of principal and deputy principal. In addition, an executive principal has started following the academy joining the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust on 1 April 2015. One teacher left the school at Easter and another has returned from leave of absence due to long-term illness. Three classes are taught by temporary staff.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress has continued to improve. The academy's data indicate that a higher proportion of children in Reception are now reaching the level of development expected before joining Year 1. Although their progress in reading, writing and mathematics fluctuates as they move through the academy, a higher proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making the progress expected. Nevertheless, standards remain low in relation to schools nationally. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are still too wide. The inconsistent quality of teaching and below-average attendance contribute to the inconsistent progress that pupils make. However, the improved accuracy of teachers' assessments, checked with other academies in the trust, means that leaders are now able to provide swifter and more precise support for pupils who are underachieving. Improvements are particularly evident for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils' work on display and in their books shows that they do better work when they clearly understand what is expected of them. Although pupils are learning to read more confidently by learning the sounds that letters make (phonics), followed by reading books and using computers, limited understanding of written information or written comments still slows their progress. Where teachers and teaching assistants show what is expected, for example through simply worded 'steps to success', examples or other stimuli, pupils progress more quickly. Pupils in a Year 2 class returning from a trip to the seaside were able to write using a wide range of vocabulary because the teacher used a series of images to refresh their memory and stimulate their discussions. By sharing describing words and learning about calligrams, pupils were able to write more confidently. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 and

6 improved their writing markedly by reading teachers' marking together, discussing how to 'up-level' their work and referring to examples.

Despite conscientious marking across the academy, not all staff give enough time or attention to pupils' responses. Pupils overall have very limited understanding of the standard of their work or how progress in a lesson might contribute to longer-term improvement in a skill that is the key to success in the subject. This particularly limits the independence and achievement of the most able pupils.

The quality of teaching

Staff are committed to improving their teaching and value the feedback received. The academy's new teaching and learning policy is at an early stage of implementation, but is already helping staff to identify and more consistently apply the features of teaching that lead to effective learning. For example, the behaviour policy is applied well, contributing to pupils' readiness to learn. Activities designed to meet the needs of different pupils in the class are the norm. However, planning is not always adapted swiftly enough to make the most of pupils' responses in the lesson. In particular, teachers do not ask questions directly, regularly or skilfully enough to check, extend or embed pupils' understanding. Consequently, although pupils rarely disrupt the learning of others not all play a part. Where pupils contribute most to their learning they gain a clear sense of direction, for example by staff returning to the purpose of the lesson at the end.

The extended leadership team's accurate evaluations of teachers' strengths and needs contribute to staff receiving appropriate training and support. This includes attending staff meetings and working alongside colleagues in lessons. The academy's programme of visits to see good practice in other schools has only involved a minority of staff so far, but all are looking forward to the opportunity. However, there are still inconsistencies within the academy that contribute to pupils' variable quality of learning, particularly where pupils are taught by temporary staff. For example, in some classes staff do not focus enough on improving pupils' handwriting. Too much use of marker pens to scribble and share ideas quickly is a contributory factor. Not all classrooms contain examples of high quality pupils' work on display to help raise their aspirations.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Since the last monitoring visit the academy council has been reinstated. Pupils in all years are represented following an election that has given them an insight into how democracy works. Pupils have taken the opportunity to represent the academy seriously; all council members are very clear about what they hope to improve through their work with staff. For example, they showed care and concern for pupils who do not feel confident enough to join in at playtimes when they suggested more organised activities led by their peers. This is reflected in classrooms, where collaborative work between pupils contributes to the development of their mutual

respect. Other responsibilities such as acting as 'language ambassadors' are growing too.

Although the quality of pupils' work in their books requires further improvement, the efforts of staff and pupils to improve the presentation and accuracy of their work are starting to take effect. The pride with which pupils share work in assembly and receive rewards for good work and behaviour shows that positive attitudes are developing. In some classes pupils' interest in learning is clearly sustained beyond the classroom. For example, the 'challenge' homeworks in Year 3 include some carefully constructed volcanoes that complement the class topic, one of which included sufficient scientific investigation to represent an eruption! The teachers' enthusiasm and safe demonstration enabled pupils to show appreciation for the skills and imagination of their peers.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Parental satisfaction has increased significantly since the school was placed in special measures. Parents and carers, pupils and staff value the calm, caring and positive environment for learning created by the principal and deputy. Better communication with parents and carers is helping to increase their awareness about ways of supporting their child's learning. For example, a remodelled website, informative newsletters and meetings, and initiatives such as family science activities provide helpful guidance. The impact on parental support with homework is evident. However, although pupils' attendance is improving persistent absence is still too high and disrupts pupils' learning at critical times.

Since the academy joined a large multi-academy trust the expertise available to senior and subject leaders has increased. For example, the science subject leader's visit to another academy in the trust has strengthened plans to improve provision in the subject, and more account is now being taken of the views of pupils and staff about science. The consultant headteacher helping to develop middle leadership is rightly focused on strengthening the impact on teaching different subjects across the academy. Closer scrutiny of pupils' work by subject leaders and clearer emphasis on subject-specific skills in their teaching are improvements. Structures to develop a more effective system of governance have been introduced. Opportunities have been planned for staff, parents, carers and the community to contribute to an advisory council. These structures complement the clearer account taken of pupils' performance when evaluating the effectiveness of teachers, support staff and leaders.

External support

The academy has continued to draw on the support of the local authority, particularly in helping staff to prepare Year 6 pupils more effectively for secondary school. In addition, the trust has provided leadership support since more than a term before transfer to the sponsor. This is increasing the academy's capacity to improve.